

CAPSULE SUMMARY
BA-0427
Stephenson Chapel
811 Quaker Bottom Road
Sparks, Baltimore County
1892
Private

Although the 1877 atlas indicates that an earlier church was sited on the lot now occupied by the Stephenson Chapel, the cornerstone of the extant building verifies that it was erected in 1892. The neighboring cemetery, however, dates to 1855, which suggests that the present building is the second church to be constructed on the site. At that time, the village of Philopolis Post Office, in which the Stephenson Chapel would be built, was a thriving community. The village's name came from a professor at the Milton Academy—the local boarding school—who taught classical Greek. In addition to the boys' boarding school, there were numerous dwellings, a public schoolhouse, gristmill and a general store in the village. By 1855, the Stephenson congregation had established the cemetery and, presumably, their first church building. By 1877, a tavern and two blacksmith's shops were established in the village. In the late 19th century, the community also included an undertaker and milliner. By 1892, the extant Stephenson Chapel was erected. By 1915, the village's name had fallen out of general use.

The Stephenson Chapel is a one-and-a-half-story, three-bay-wide structure of wood frame construction with an asphalt-shingled front gable roof and a solid random rubble stone foundation. A small bell tower with a pyramidal roof is located at the front of the roof ridge. The three-bay-deep main block is augmented by the presence of a one-bay-square projecting entry bay with a gable roof. Circa 1930, a one-and-a-half-story, one-bay-deep addition on a poured concrete foundation was constructed on the rear elevation. Circa 1990, the entire building was re-clad in vinyl siding. An interior stretcher bond chimney rises along the side elevation. A central single-leaf vinyl door that is flush with lights centrally pierces the projecting entry bay. A one-light casement window is located on each side of the entry bay. The gable peak of the main block is pierced by a four-light D-light. All façade openings have vinyl surrounds and sills. Beside the entry porch a flush-vertical-board single-leaf wood door with a square-edged wood surround provides entry into the basement. The cornerstone of the building reads "Stephenson Chapel, Sept. 18th, 1892, Rev. T.H. Keets, Pas." The cemetery, which dates to 1855 and is still in use as a burial

BA-427

ground, is composed of approximately 100 to 150 graves. Located northwest of the Stephenson Chapel is a circa 1890 vernacular dwelling that is two stories tall and three bays wide of wood frame construction on a solid random rubble stone foundation. A circa 1980 shed clad entirely in standing seam metal is also located on the property.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. BA-0427

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Stephenson Chapel (preferred)
other Stephenson A.M.E. Church

2. Location

street and number 811 Quaker Bottom Road not for publication
city, town Sparks vicinity
county Baltimore County

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Stephenson African Methodist Church
street and number 811 Quaker Bottom Road telephone Not Available
city, town Sparks state MD zip code 21152

4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore County Courthouse liber Not Available folio Not Available
city, town Towson tax map 34 tax parcel 142 tax ID number 0819071650

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Current Function | Resource Count |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | Contributing Noncontributing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> defense | <input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | | <input type="checkbox"/> domestic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> social |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> funerary | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> health care | <input type="checkbox"/> unknown |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> buildings |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> sites |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> structures |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> objects |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> Total |
| | | | Number of Contributing Resources previously listed in the Inventory |
| | | | <u>1</u> |

7. Description

Inventory No. BA-0427

Condition

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> altered |

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Constructed in 1892, the Stephenson Chapel is a one-and-a-half-story, three-bay-wide vernacular structure of wood frame construction with an asphalt-shingled front gable roof and a solid random rubble stone foundation. A small bell tower with a pyramidal roof is located at the front of the roof ridge. The three-bay-deep main block is augmented by the presence of a one-bay-square projecting entry bay with a gable roof. Circa 1930, a one-and-a-half-story, one-bay-deep addition on a poured concrete foundation was constructed on the rear elevation. Circa 1990, the entire building was re-clad in vinyl siding. An interior stretcher bond chimney rises along the side elevation. A central single-leaf vinyl door that is flush with lights centrally pierces the projecting entry bay. A one-light casement window is located on each side of the entry bay. The gable peak of the main block is pierced by a four-light D-light. All façade openings have vinyl surrounds and sills. Beside the entry porch a flush-vertical-board single-leaf wood door with a square-edged wood surround provides entry into the basement. The cornerstone of the building reads "Stephenson Chapel, Sept. 18th, 1892, Rev. T.H. Keets, Pas."

The cemetery, which is still in use as a burial ground, is composed of approximately 100 to 150 graves that are arranged into groupings, rather than rows, that face east and west. The cemetery dates to 1855, and the majority of the 19th century headstones are upright slabs of granite and marble. Primarily granite headstones comprise the 20th century grave markers, many of which are bevel markers.

Located northwest of the Stephenson Chapel is a circa 1890 vernacular dwelling of wood frame construction on a solid random rubble stone foundation. The two-story, three-bay-wide building, which is clad in asbestos shingles, features an asphalt-shingled side gable roof. The façade, or northeast elevation, is pierced by one sash-and-paneled single-leaf wood door with a square-edged wood surround and four 1/1 vinyl windows with vinyl surrounds and sills. A one-story addition with a shed roof projects from the side of the building.

A circa 1980 shed clad entirely in standing seam metal is also located on the property. The one-story, one-bay-square building sits on a poured concrete slab foundation. The door is missing.

8. Significance

Inventory No. BA-0427

| Period | Areas of Significance | Check and justify below | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine | <input type="checkbox"/> performing arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2000- | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> social history |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | | <input type="checkbox"/> maritime history | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

Specific dates 1892-present **Architect/Builder** Unknown

Construction dates 1892, 1930 ca.

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☐ Maryland Register

☒ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Although the 1877 atlas indicates that an earlier church was sited on the lot now occupied by the Stephenson Chapel, the cornerstone of the extant building verifies that it was erected in 1892. The neighboring cemetery, however, dates to 1855, which suggests that the present building is the second church to be constructed on the site. No church yet existed for the Stephenson congregation by the mid-19th century, as is indicated by the 1850 county atlas. At that time, the village of Philopolis Post Office, in which the Stephenson Chapel would be built, was a thriving community. The village's name came from a professor at the Milton Academy—the local boarding school—who taught classical Greek.¹ In addition to the boys' boarding school, there were numerous dwellings, a public schoolhouse, gristmill and a general store in the village.² By 1855, the Stephenson congregation had established the cemetery and, presumably, their first church building, which was in use by 1877.³ Philopolis continued to grow rapidly, and by 1877, a tavern and two blacksmith's shops were established there.⁴ In the late 19th century, the community also included an undertaker and milliner.⁵ By 1892, the extant Stephenson Chapel was erected. Although the community continued to develop through the early 20th century, its growth slowed. By 1915, the village's name had fallen out of general use.⁶ Over the last century, Philopolis has become engulfed by the neighboring community of Sparks.

¹ S. B. Clemens and C. E. Clemens, *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County* (np: C. E. Clemens and S. B. Clemens, 1976), p. 23.

² J.C. Sidney, *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys* (Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850).

³ Baltimore County Historic Inventory; see also *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877).

⁴ *Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland* (Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877).

⁵ S. B. Clemens and C. E. Clemens, *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County* (np: C. E. Clemens and S. B. Clemens, 1976), p. 23.

⁶ *Map of Baltimore County* (Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Inventory No. BA-0427

Atlas of Baltimore County, Maryland. Philadelphia, PA: G. M. Hopkins, 1877.

Baltimore County Historic Inventory.

Brooks, Neal A. and Eric G. Rockel. *A History of Baltimore County.* Towson, MD: Friends of the Towson Library, Inc., 1979.

Clemens, S.B. and C. E. Clemens, *From Marble Hill to Maryland Line: An Informal History of Northern Baltimore County.* C. E. and S. B. Clemens, 1976.

Map of Baltimore County. Philadelphia, PA: G. W. Bromley, 1915.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Baltimore City and County From the Earliest Period to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men.* Philadelphia, PA: Louis H. Everts, 1881. Reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem, MA.

Sidney, J. C. *Map of the City and County of Baltimore, Maryland, from Original Surveys.* Baltimore, MD: James M. Stephens, 1850.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property .50 Acre

Acreage of historical setting Unknown

Quadrangle name Hereford

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

Verbal boundary description and justification

Since its construction in 1892, the Stephenson Chapel has been associated with the .5 acres of land known as tax parcel 142 of map 34 located in the Baltimore County Tax Assessor's office.

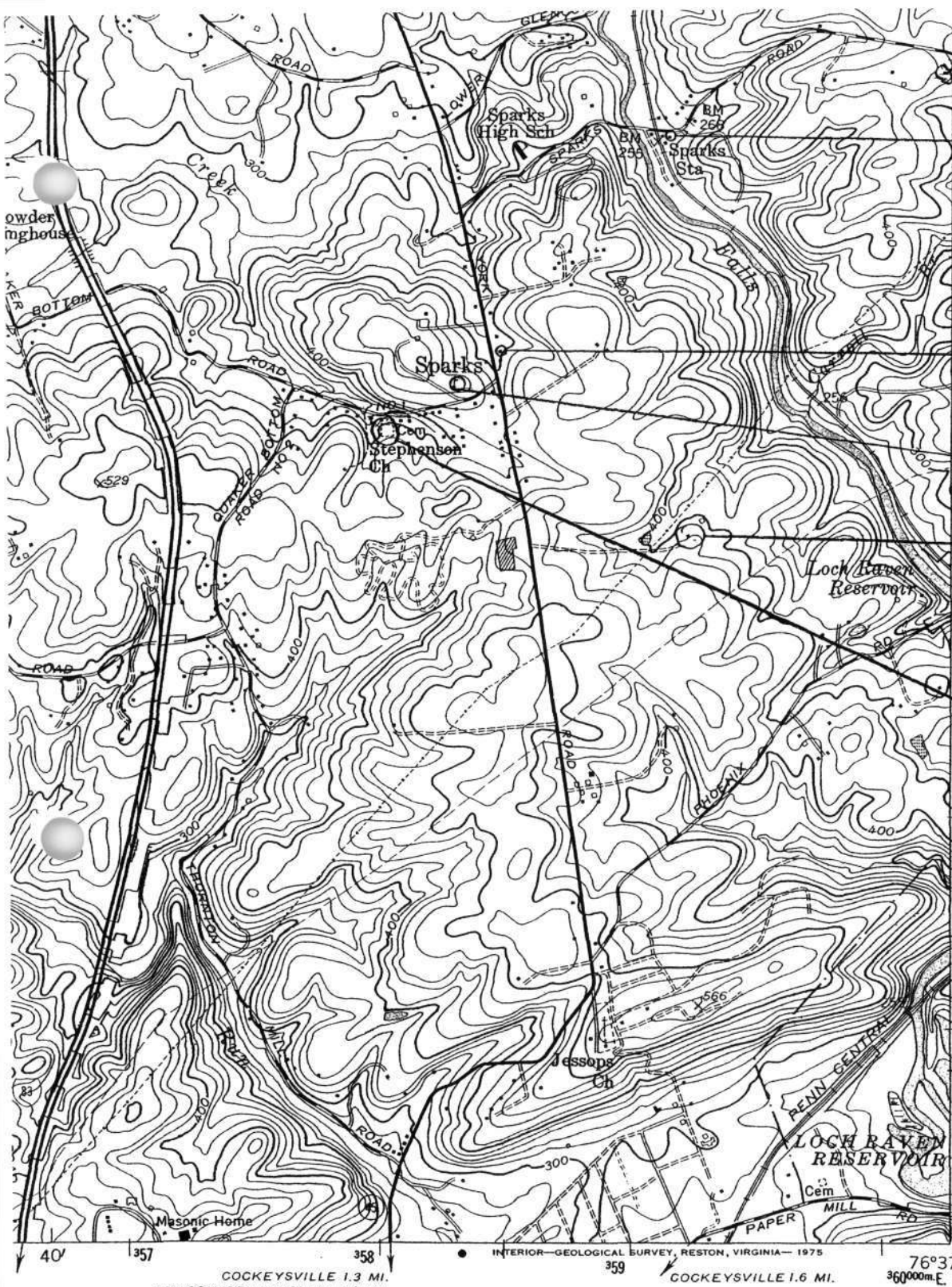
11. Form Prepared by

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------|--------------|
| name/title | A. McDonald and A. Didden, Architectural Historians | | |
| organization | EHT Tracerics, Incorporated | date | May 15, 2001 |
| street & number | 1121 5th Street NW | telephone | 202.393.1199 |
| city or town | Washington | state | DC |

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600



1531 SPARKS ROAD
SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY

BA-2462
1207 SPARKS ROAD

BA-1716
14825 YORK ROAD

BA-0428
7 STODDARD COURT

BA 266
14611 YORK ROAD

BA-0427
811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD
SPARKS, BALTIMORE COUNTY

COCKEYSVILLE 1.3 MI.
TOWSON (COURTHOUSE) 7.4 MI.

INTERIOR-GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, RESTON, VIRGINIA-1975
COCKEYSVILLE 1.6 MI.

JACKSONVILLE 3.8 MI.
(TOWSON)
5662' NE

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

- Heavy-duty _____ Light-duty _____
- Medium-duty _____ Unimproved dirt - - - - -
- U.S. Route State Route



HEREFORD, MD.

N 3930-W 7637.5/7.5

1958
PHOTOREVISED 1974
AMS 5663 II SW-SERIES V833



BA-0427

811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD, SPARKS

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

3/2001

MD SH80

N. CORNER

1 of 5



BA-0427

811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD, SPARKS

BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACELIES

3/2001

MD SHPO

SE ELEVATION

2015



BA-0427

811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD, SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

3/2001

MD SHPO

W. CORNER



BA-0427

811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD, SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

3/2001

MD SHPO

SW ELEVATION + SINGLE DWELLING

4055



BA 0427

811 QUAKER BOTTOM ROAD, SPARKS
BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD

TRACERIES

3/2001

MD SHPO

CEMETERY

BA - 427

STEPHENSON A.M.E. CHURCH - 1892 - South side of Quaker Bottom Road, west of York Road at Philopolis. Church is an outgrowth of a cemetery established in 1855 by Azahel Stephenson and other trustees. A deed of 1866 mentions a church. Present cornerstone reads: "Stephenson Chapel, Sept. 18th, 1892 Rev. T. H. Keets, Pas." Church is frame, in two segments; gable roof, small open belfry. Walls covered with two kinds of formstone. Vernacular style.